

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application as presently amended and in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-5 are pending in the present application. Claim 1 has been amended by the present amendment without an introduction of any new matter.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 1 and 2 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as anticipated by Friday et al. (U.S. Patent 6,183,627, herein "Friday"); and Claims 3-5 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Friday.

Claim 1 has been amended to recite, among other things, that the heavy oil content is "obtained directly from a bottom of the distilling section." Amended Claim 1 finds support at page 11, lines 4-11 of the specification, and in Figure 1, for example. No new matter is added. Applicants respectfully submit that the amendments to Claim 1 overcome the rejections based on Friday, for the following reasons.

In particular, in Friday, a non-distilled fraction 18 drawn from the bottom of a distillation column 14 is led to a solvent deasphalting (SDA) unit 19. The solvent deasphalting (SDA) unit 19 separates the non-distilled fraction 18 into an asphaltene stream 21 and a deasphaltene oil stream 20. Asphaltene is removed as the asphaltene stream 21, and the deasphaltene oil stream 20 is combined with a hydrogen donor stream 17A at a node 22. Then, the deasphaltene oil stream 20 and the hydrogen donor stream 17A are mixed, and forms a thermally crack stream 23. The thermally crack stream 23 is then led to the thermal cracker 24, and the thermal cracker 24 thermally cracks the thermally crack stream 23.

Clearly, Friday does not disclose or suggest a step of thermally cracking a "heavy oil content obtained *directly* from a bottom of the distilling section ..." (emphasis added) as recited in amended Claim 1.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that independent Claim 1 and each of the claims depending therefrom are believed to patentably distinguish over Friday.

Consequently, in light of the above discussion, and in view of the present amendment, Applicants respectfully submit that the present application is in condition for allowance, and an early action favorable to that effect is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gregory J. Maier", is written over a horizontal line.

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